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SECURITY INFORMATION

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APR 23 1952

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

22 April 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: SE-25: Communist Short-Term Intentions in Korea

1. The attached draft estimate has been approved by the Board of National Estimates pursuant to a consideration of it by the IAC representatives.

2. This estimate has been placed on the agenda of the IAC meeting scheduled for 10:30 Thursday, 24 April.

3. Pursuant to paragraph 5 b. of NSCID #1, Revised, dated March 28, 1952, the dissemination of this estimate to [REDACTED] will be considered at the IAC meeting.

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[REDACTED]
Acting Executive Secretary

Distribution "A"

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

22 April 1952

SUBJECT: SE-25: MILITARY INDICATIONS OF A POSSIBLE LARGE-SCALE
COMMUNIST ATTACK IN KOREA IN THE IMMEDIATE
FUTURE.

THE PROBLEM

To estimate, on the basis of military indications, Communist intentions with regard to a large-scale military attack in Korea in the immediate future.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There has been a general strengthening of Communist military capabilities in Korea since the beginning of the armistice negotiations. The enemy is credited with a greater offensive potential than he has previously enjoyed and is believed capable of launching a major ground and/or air attack with little warning.

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2. In recent weeks there have been several indications, generally unconfirmed, of increased enemy activity in Korea. Owing to the inconclusive nature of these indications, however, they do not constitute acceptable proof of a Communist intent to initiate large-scale offensive action in the immediate future.

DISCUSSION

I. COMMUNIST CAPABILITIES IN KOREA

3. During the armistice negotiations, the Communist have substantially increased their capabilities in Korea. They have replaced their losses, re-equipped their units, retrained their troops, and reorganized and redispensed their forces. They have built up their ground forces from an estimated 502,000 to the present estimate of 866,000 personnel. Qualitative improvement has accompanied the quantitative build-up; they have made significant additions of armor and artillery and have substantially increased the fire power of all units.

4. The Communists have made excellent use of the long period of fairly static operations to improve their logistical position. As a result the supply position of the Communists in forward areas, despite continued air and naval attacks by UN forces, is far better than at any time since the Chinese Communist intervention in Korea.

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5. The enemy ground forces in Korea could launch a major attack with little warning. It is estimated that the Communists have the logistic capability to maintain the momentum of a major offensive for from 5 to 10 days. Difficulties in connection with the movement of supplies from forward dumps to the attacking units would be the limiting factor.

6. The capabilities of the Communist Air Force in the Korean area (North Korea, Manchuria, and Northeast China) have improved steadily and rapidly. During the armistice negotiations, Communist combat aircraft strength in the Korean area has increased from 500 aircraft to the present total of 1,380 aircraft including an increase from 460 jets to the current estimate of 815 jets. In addition, there are 420 combat aircraft deployed in south and central China. Airfields in Manchuria have been reconstructed and greatly improved. A well-integrated system of air control and warning has been established. Communist pilots have been engaged in an intensive training program which has included combat experience. The Communists have also demonstrated a significant capability to maintain and replace aircraft and support them logistically in sustained operations.

7. The Communist Air Force in the Korean area could launch an intense air attack which might inflict serious damage upon United

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Nations ground forces, naval and air installations, and lines of communications in Korea. This attack could include an initial commitment of over 500 Mig-15's as well as substantial numbers of piston-engined fighters and light bombers.

II. INDICATIONS OF COMMUNIST MILITARY INTENTIONS IN KOREA

A. Ground

8. In recent weeks there have been several indications, generally unconfirmed, of increased enemy activity in Korea.

a. The movement of two Chinese Communist armies, one forward towards the western sector and one eastward towards the central sector, has been accepted. The movement of three other CCF armies toward the western sector has been reported but is unconfirmed.

b. Reports of PW's and other information point to the possibility of a forward movement of some armored vehicles from the Wonsan area on the east coast, suggesting that elements of the CCF 3rd Armored Division may have been moved southward. During the past months several unconfirmed reports have also referred to the southward movement of the North Korean V Corps.

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9. During the past few weeks there have been four PW reports of a new offensive. Most PW's, however, have continued to refer to enemy defensive plans, including the strengthening of defense fortifications and the rotation of front-line units.

10. The possibility that the enemy is preparing to relieve some front-line units is further suggested by PW reports that the CCF 67th Army will relieve the 68th Army and that the CCF 26th Army is to be relieved in the immediate future. There is no confirmation, however, that the relief of any front-line units is under way.

11. There has been one recent report that North Korean guerrilla forces are being trained to infiltrate UN lines (a tactic which has preceded previous offensive). This report receives some substantiation from the recent capture by UN forces of a small number of line-crossers.

B. Air

12. The most significant recent incident with respect to enemy air activity was a visual sighting on 13 April of 450 jet aircraft on Tatungku airfield and 50 on Antung airfield. This is approximately twice the number of aircraft ever before sighted on

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these airfields and very nearly the total estimated Mig-15 strength in Manchuria. Although an error of up to 75 aircraft in this sighting is possible, this report is regarded as substantially accurate. Subsequent observations during the day disclosed that this total has been reduced to approximately 200 aircraft on both fields. Possible explanations for this concentration are that bad weather precluded the use of other Manchurian airfields or that this was a test of personnel and facilities under crowded conditions. It is also possible that this represented a "show of force" designed to influence the armistice discussions.

13. Other indications that the enemy may be preparing for increased air activity, possibly including operations over South Korea on a large scale, were: (a) the reported observation on 1 April of a Mig-15 over the Seoul-Suwon area on what appeared to be a photo-reconnaissance flight; (b) recent increased willingness of enemy pilots to engage UN aircraft; reported repairs of Pyongyang airfields; and (d) observation of some vehicle activity at Taechon airfield on 13 April, the first observation of activity at any of the three airfields in the Sinanju area in sometime.

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